

MEETING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, February 28, 2019, 8:00 a.m., Conference Room 214, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mary Campbell, Kile Johnson, Ann Post and Jeff Searcy; (Karen Nalow absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: David Cary, Ed Zimmer, Stacey Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department, Robert Ripley and Matt Hansen of the Nebraska Capitol Commission, J.J. Yost of Parks and Recreation, Delonte Johnson, Mark Walz and Tim Schlegelmilch of Farmers Mutual of Nebraska, Matt Metcalf and Connor Griess of Davis Design.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission Meeting

Chair Jeff Searcy called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Searcy then called for a motion approving the minutes of the regular meeting held November 13, 2018. Motion for approval made by Johnson, seconded by Post and carried 4-0: Campbell, Johnson, Post and Searcy voting 'yes'; Nalow absent.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT THE FARMERS MUTUAL INSURANCE BUILDINGS, 501 SOUTH 13TH STREET AND 1220 LINCOLN MALL IN THE CAPITOL ENVIRONS DISTRICT

PUBLIC HEARING:

February 28, 2019

Members present: Campbell, Johnson, Post and Searcy; Nalow absent.

Mark Walz shared that in 2013, Farmers Mutual built the new corporate headquarters oriented north and south. They vacated the old home office, the 1220 Lincoln Mall building. They are currently leasing that out, but still own it. They intentionally left the 3rd floor open for future expansion. This has been in the works for a while. It has been a little surprise that after five years, they have already outgrown the space in their new headquarters. This is partially due to

the fact that Farmers Mutual are expanding. They are anticipating to add upwards of 20 employees. They will move one of their departments into the third floor of the 1220 building. They want to build a skywalk to link the two buildings. They replatted the entire block in the last twelve months. This is now the Farmers Mutual Addition. They plan to keep their corporate headquarters in downtown Lincoln.

Connor Griess showed the site plan. The skywalk will be between the two buildings to allow employees to move back and forth. Right now, there is a level change between the two buildings. There will be two stairways in the walkway to link the two levels together. They saw an opportunity to create a unique space in the skywalk. A lift will also be provided for the level change between the two buildings. There is glass on the north and south side. This will allow them to tie everything together. The skywalk will have the dark glass and similar stone. A structural column will be added. This is not a high impact area since it sits back from the street view. The limestone material will carry over to the walkway.

Campbell wondered if it was necessary to introduce another size and dimension of windows. Connor believes this was a way to blend the mullions and tie them together.

Ripley is curious if there is a similar circulation core at the ground level from one building to the other. Connor replied no. They looked at that. They talked to LES (Lincoln Electric System) about how they could connect these buildings. There is a trash collection area and transformers on the ground level.

Ed Zimmer believes this also gives more unity between the buildings. This allows the space of the new and old to link up.

Searcy thinks this looks like a good plan.

Johnson thinks it's a neat use of the whole block. Adding parking and a new building is an improvement to the whole neighborhood.

Searcy stated that Farmers Mutual has always been an outstanding corporate contributor to the environs. They have always come in very early with their plans. He thinks this is a very nice addition.

Post commented that Baylor Evnen Law Firm does a lot of work with Farmers Mutual. She personally has no connection with this, but wanted to make it known. This is a wonderful project.

ACTION:

Campbell moved approval of the skywalk as presented, seconded by Johnson and carried 4-0: Campbell, Johnson, Post and Searcy voting 'yes'; Nalow absent.

Conversation with Tonya Ford regarding the concept of locating a Worker's Memorial on Lincoln Mall in the Capitol Environs District:

Zimmer and Stacey Hageman met with Tonya Ford. She is a State representative of a national organization that wishes for each state to have a memorial for workers who died on the job. She doesn't have a design. He believes she has an interest on the center median of Lincoln Mall. Ripley commented that this would not be very visible. Zimmer agreed. If there is a spot, it might be on the wide grass between the curb and office. The Commission will need to hear about the concept. He appreciates they don't believe it should be on the Capitol grounds or Centennial Mall. They need to begin with a discussion. This is barely beyond the concept stage.

Campbell questioned if 'workers' has been defined. Zimmer responded that it appears to be everyone who has died on the job. In his mind, the memorial can't be adding names. This would be quite a list. It might give a gathering point, but it does seem to apply to everyone.

Ripley believes the standards show an emphasis on the mall. He inquired if there was ever a concept regarding how this might take form. Zimmer noted the guidelines say State and local for Centennial Mall. He believes there are better opportunities for Lincoln Mall. A few states have these. It might be a kneeling figure. It has to be a very allegorical figure to represent everybody.

Campbell wondered if there is anything for firefighters or police. Zimmer remembers there was a brief discussion about a first responder memorial on the southernmost block of Lincoln Mall. That went to a training academy in Grand Island. There have been some discussions in the past. That is one of the reasons why this commission exists.

Ripley inquired if there is a committee or team associated with this. Zimmer believes Tonya Ford is the Nebraska representative of this effort.

Searcy stated that when this is more developed and further, the Commission would be more than happy to hear more about this with more detail.

Johnson pointed out that Memorial Gardens in Antelope Park has added four or five more memorials. It is getting almost to the point of almost overwhelming.

2018 Annual Report:

Zimmer stated that the annual report is essentially the same as the draft that was presented in November 2018 to the Commission.

ACTION:

Johnson moved approval, seconded by Campbell and carried 4-0: Campbell, Johnson, Post and Searcy voting 'yes'; Nalow absent.

Miscellaneous:

J.J. Yost wanted to update the Commission on Centennial Mall traffic signal modifications. Public Works has started at N Street. The N Street signal has been changed to vertically and moved to the outside of the lane. The mast arm will be cut back. Public Works has asked that they give this a little time.

Matt Hansen believes the signal looks good. You almost won't see it.

Yost continued that the spacing will be adjusted. At O Street, essentially the same thing will happen, hopefully in the next three months. One head will be moved vertically and the other will be moved over. The same thing will happen south bound. One more block down is already done. There is some debate on the signing. It is possible they may add a right turn only.

Johnson wondered with the configuration, if it can be taken down to just the pole. Yost replied the traffic engineers just weren't comfortable with that. Traffic officials said they worry about people from out of state getting confused if they aren't familiar with the area.

Searcy stated this is great and welcome news.

Ripley offered a suggestion that a thank you note be extended to Public Works for their assistance on this.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 a.m.